major oil companies for under-utilising the available capacity of production thereby lowering crude oil output, if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether it is a fact that this leaves room for imports of crude oil and, as such the adverse balance of payments position is primarily due to the import of crude and other petroleum products by these two major oil companies, if so, what are the reasons for this shortcoming?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) National Council for Civil Liberties, Ahmedabad has lodged a complaint with the Director General of Investigation and Registeration of MRTP Commission in January, 1993 alleging, interalic, under-utilisation of the available capacity of the production, by deliberately lowering down the crude oil production, by ONGC and OIL.

(c) The shortfall in crude oil production is mainly due to :—

(i) Slippages in projects;
(ii) Strike by the employees;
(iii) Reservoir constraints in WRBC
(iv) Floods/power shortages etc.;
(v) Frequent bandhs/barricades in the eastern region;
(vi) Rectificatory measures in Bombay High field.

The deficit is made good by imports to meet the essential needs of the economy.

Oil Exploration by ONGC at Ichapur well-1 in West Bengal

1777. DR. ASHOK MITRA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that preliminary explorations by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission at the site of Ichapur Well-1 located in North 24-Parganas, West Bengal have indicated the possibility of extraction of high grade oil;

(b) if so, what are the details of the chemical and other properties of the oil struck at the location; and

(c) what follow-up measures have been taken by the ONGC and Government for the extraction of oil and gas for commercial purposes from Ichapur and its neighbourhood?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) The exploratory drilling work at the site of Ichapur-1 well has indicated non-commercial flow of 1 m^3/day, condensate with 1600 to 2000 m^3/day low pressure gas during testing from the interval 4346-4349 m.

(b) The hydrocarbon fluid from Ichapur-1 is CONDENSATE in nature having low density, low pour point, low asphaltene and low wax content. It is paraffinic napthenic in nature.

The stable carbon isotopic studies on gases indicate thermal origin. Gases are wet gases which contain higher hydrocarbons upto Pentane. It has high proportion of nitrogen and is devoid of other inert gases.

(c) The find is so far non-commercial, however, a step-out location Ichapur-2 is under drilling to delineate the extension of the pay sand. The area is also being covered by 3-D seismic survey.

Cooking Gas connections to Freedom Fighters

1778. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have allowed cooking gas connection on out of turn basis to the families of freedom fighters; and

(b) if not, whether Government

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) There is no such policy.

(b) There is no such proposal under consideration at present.

Progress made in Evaluation and Negotiations with the Bidders to Develop Oil Fields

1779. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH:
SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 2938 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 18th August, 1993 and state:

(a) what are the details of the progress so far made in the evaluation and negotiations with the bidders of 117 bids received from Indian and foreign companies for the exploration and development of medium and small-sized oil fields;

(b) whether any contracts have so far been finalised after completing negotiations with the bidders, if so, what are the details in this regard in respect of each case; and

(c) what are the details of progress relating to each medium and small-sized oil fields in respect of which contracts have so far been awarded?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) to (c) The Government have approved the finalisation of contracts for the following six small-sized fields:

(i) Bakrol (ii) Lohar (iii) Bhandut (iv) Cambay (v) Matar (vi) Sabarmati. The contracts with the parties are yet to be signed.

More Gas from Off-Shore Tapti

1780. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMAN BHAI PETEL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more gas is likely to be available from off-shore Tapti structure than orginally anticiated;

(b) if so, what is the quantum of gas likely to be produced form Tapti; and

(c) Whether it is costlier to bring Tapti gas to Hazira than to pipeway in Saurashtra?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) The projected plateau production from Mid and South Tapti fields is 4.03 $mm^3/_d$.

(c) The decision to bring gas from mid Tapti and South Tapti fields to Hazira has been taken to meet the commitments already made ex-Hazira and along the HRJ pipeline.

Putting out of Foreign Oil Companies from Fourth round of Bidding

1781. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the foreign oil companies which succeeded in the fourth round of bidding for oil exploration in the country have pulled out;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) what is its likely impact on the oil exploration programme; and

(d) what further steps are proposed to be taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Government